

IL 19-98-002

In Reply Refer To: **193B1**

July 6, 1998

CHIEF INFORMATION OFFICER LETTER

**NATIONAL ARCHIVES AND RECORDS ADMINISTRATION (NARA) - VA
RECORDS MANAGEMENT PARTNERSHIP; GUIDANCE ON TRANSFERS AND
GENERAL INFORMATION**

1. As a component of the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) partnership, VA has established a records management team to assist NARA in addressing records management matters. Consequently, the team has been meeting with NARA staff to resolve several records management issues relating to VA's operations. This Information Letter describes those issues and provides guidance on a change to NARA's procedures for transferring records to Federal records centers.

a. **Issue One.** Federal records centers (FRC) have been inappropriately receiving inquiries for records from veterans and other individuals. The Department has agreed to issue a Department-wide notice to field facilities and VA Central Office elements informing records management officials that veterans, beneficiaries, and the general public are not to be referred to Federal records centers for the retrieval of records.

b. **Issue Two.** NARA has not been receiving VA's records management manuals. VA Directive 6300, Records and Information Management, and VA Handbook 6300.1, Records Management Procedures, have been forwarded to NARA. These manuals are available on the Internet at <http://www.va.gov/publ/direc/eds/edsdirec.htm>. In the future, VA agreed to provide NARA with current copies of VA records management manuals, including the Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA) records control schedule. NARA has received copies of VHA's Records Schedule 10-1 directly from the VA Depot.

c. **Issue Three.** This issue pertains to the VBA Beneficiary Identification Records Locator Subsystems (BIRLS). VA staff will be meeting with VBA officials to resolve problems with BIRLS concerning the location of records, specifically those affected by the transfers of XC folders to NARA's Pittsfield records center and the transfers of records from the closing of the FRC Bayonne. In addition to the BIRLS issue, VA and NARA will be examining procedures to enhance the exchange of electronic information between the two organizations. VA has agreed to conduct a survey of its major information systems so that the electronic records can be properly scheduled for eventual disposal. VHA's Ionizing Radiation Registry electronic records are being appraised for retention and disposal by NARA.

d. **Issue Four.** NARA wants VA to identify and schedule special media records, identify permanent records in VA Central Office, and develop a process for reviewing the retention periods of its long-term records. Unscheduled media records such as audiovisual and

July 6, 1998

cartographic records will be scheduled with NARA. VA Central Office permanent records will be identified for eventual transfer to the National Archives. VA will review the retention period for its long-term records.

e. **Issue Five.** Regarding training, the VA team will assess the Department's training needs, including higher level briefings and Federal records centers workshops. NARA will design training courses to meet VA training requirements. VA will examine NARA presentations at the Information Technology Conference and other VA meetings in order to develop a list of individuals who have records management responsibilities in VA Central Office as well as the field.

2. NARA has informed VA that the Central Plains Region facilities in Kansas City, MO, are designated sites for the storage of long-term records such as patients' medical folders. NARA has authorized the storage of short-term records (retention period of seven years or less) at the local NARA facility that stored VA records prior to centralization. NARA Central Plains Region facilities will accept short-term records as well as long-term records from those VA facilities normally served by the Central Plains Region or by the Bayonne, NJ, FRC.

3. In accordance with VA Handbook 6300.1, Records Management Procedures, Standard Forms 258 (SF 258), Agreement to Transfer Records to the National Archives of the United States, are to be submitted through the Directives, Forms, and Records Management Division (193B1), to the VA Records Officer (Director, Information Management Service (045A4)) for action. The VA Records Officer must authorize all transfers of permanent records to the National Archives.

4. Questions regarding this Information Letter may be referred to Mr. Sherwin Lynch at (202) 273-8312 or via Internet at sherwin.c.lynch@hq.med.va.gov.

R. David Albinson
Chief Information Officer

DISTRIBUTION: CO: E-mailed 7/6/98
FLD: VISN, MA, DO, OC, OCRO, and 200 - FAX 7/6/98
EX: Boxes 104, 88, 63, 60, 54, 52, 47, and 44 - FAX 7/6/98